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CHRISTIANS IN SOLIDARITY WITH EAST TIMOR

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This newsheet is printed not only for CISET members but for all those interested in the cause of the East Timorese people.

THE INDONESIAN BISHOPS PLEDGE NOT ONLY PRAYERS BUT THEIR SUPPORT

In an historic and significant move, the Indonesian bishops have written a letter to the church and people of East Timor.

Dated the 17th of November, 1983, the letter has a strong emphasis on the enormity of the people's sufferings and the urgent need for action on the people's behalf to bring about a just solution, based on the dignity and desires of the Timorese people.

After outlining the immediate and urgent need for a "return to peace for all those now at war", they add a note of realism "we must confess that our help has been a drop of water in the ocean of pain that has been suffered".

The Bishops outline plans for education and skilled assistance but above all emphasise their concern and solidarity for the people "We struggle through various ways to enforce acknowledgement and respect for those things which are considered most sacred by the people of Timor: their religion, their family and their land. In other words, respect for ... rights, for the lives and dignity af mankind."

This is the first time that the Indonesian heirachy have publicly and officialy stated their position.

They offer not only words but some tangible prayers " that we will never be frightened from searching for a road to peace", noting that peace is an enterprise of justice" and some tangible support. It is a letter of great hope.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE 8TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDONESIAN INVASION OF EAST TIMOR

December 7th marked the sad day. To commemorate the occasion a and especially to pray with the people in East Timor, a prayer service was held. Some CISET members sent in the following reflections. " Our first awareness of the

REFLECTIONS (CONT.)

East Timorese folk marching through the Lonsdale Street Mall, to the beat of a drum (with a rhythm like that of a funeral march), being guarded by some hooded members of the Indonesian military forces, forcibly moving their charges to the City Square, the site of their execution. The sight of a heap of crumpled bodies, later to be covered with a bloodstained sheet, presented the stark reality of East Timor today.

Then after a prayer and Bible readings we all marched in silence to St Paul's Cathedral, lead by the Rev Phillip Huggins, who then conducted a service. We became keenly aware of a oneness of spirit with our brothers and sisters in East Timor. We felt humbled to be part of such a moving experience.

SPECIAL MEETING

You are warmly invited to attend a Special Planning Meeting which is being specially organised to foster Church backing for a new ALP commitment to self-determination for Timor.

This will be held on Tuesday, May 1, 1984 at 7:30 p.m. at the YWCA, 489 Elizabeth St, Melbourne.

THE PART YOU WON'T WANT TO READ

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